

Claims

Claim1: I claim as my invention a life raft constructed with air-inflatable panels that form a spherical shell (and/or any other spheroidal shape such as exemplified by the shapes of a sphere, an egg, an elliptical capsule or other three dimensional forms of such nature) together with an internal water-inflatable ballast tank that will act synergistically with the spherical shell when placed in water and when the inflatable panels are inflated with air, gas or atmosphere to provide buoyancy and when the ballast tank is inflated with water to produce counterbalancing weight thereby creating counter forces that will ensure the stable verticality of the raft, all of which meaning that when the new art raft encounters the force of a wave, the buoyancy provided by the inflated upper shell of the raft becomes a force acting through a fulcrum about the center of the raft to hold the top of the raft up and the weight of the water-inflated ballast tank becomes an opposing force acting through a fulcrum about the center of the raft to hold the bottom of the raft down thus creating equal counter-forces that thereby ensure the stable verticality of the raft.

Claim 2: I also claim that the structure of the raft is constructed with materials, methods and techniques normal to the inflatable raft industry and that the longitudinal joints formed by the overlapping of contiguous edges of the panels that form the shape of the raft are reinforced with high tensile strength tape such as produced by the 3M company and that the joints are extended beyond the top of the raft to form straps that are looped around a similarly constructed harness to allow a grappling hook or other such device to engage the harness during rescue operations and as will be required to support the full weight of the raft when fully occupied (including ballast water when unavoidable) to allow the raft to be hoisted over the side of a vessel or to be hoisted out of the water by ship or helicopter.